

*Open to God's Spirit,  
we reach out in Love to the World  
and invite All to journey with us*

An Open and Affirming Congregation

## *The* VINEYARD

Newsletter of The Lockport  
United Church of Christ

# JULY/AUGUST 2025

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### SUMMER FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

#### ***Game Night***

Wednesday, July 16 – 6:00 PM

An evening for church folks to get together just for fun!

We will have pizza, snacks & goodies,  
and a group game that everyone can play.

We hope to have a big turnout, because  
games with more people means more fun!

#### ***Worship in the Park***

Sunday, August 3 – 11:00 AM

Our morning service will be moving outside to worship in the park. We will again be at the Veteran's Park in Gasport. (Directions to the park are on the next page.) We have a shelter reserved, so we will meet rain or shine. There is parking and rest rooms close to the shelter.

Following the service, we will be sharing a picnic lunch. Hot dogs, hamburgs and drinks will be provided. There will be a sign up sheet for anyone who is able to help by bringing a dish to share – salads, desserts, etc. *Please join us!*

## Directions to Royalton Veterans Park

- Take **Route 31** east from Lockport.
- At the “V” where you see Crosby’s store, (shortly before the elementary school), go **Left** onto **Telegraph Road**.
- The park is about half a mile, on your **Right**.
- Turn in through the chain link fence gate.
- You can’t miss our shelter – there’s only one.



## THE VINEYARD

A publication of The Lockport  
United Church of Christ  
80 Main St. - Suite H  
Lockport, New York  
(716) 433-2545

*The Vineyard is published  
ten times a year to keep  
members and friends  
informed about  
programs of the church  
and news of its people.*

Submissions Welcome  
**Deadline for Next Issue:  
August 17, 2025**

## † BIBLE STUDY AT LUCC †

### *Tuesday Study Group Has Moved*

Our Tuesday Bible Study group has moved from morning to afternoon. They now meet at **1:00 PM**, and will continue to meet through the summer. See Nancy Sy if you would like to join them or need more information.

### *Disciple Group Breaks for Summer*

Our Disciple group, which meets on Thursdays, is taking a break for the summer. We will resume in September. If you are interested in more information about the group, please speak to Cyndy. We’d love to have you join us this Fall!

## NEIGHBORHOOD DINNER HAS MOVED

Our next Neighborhood Dinner (formerly Community Dinner) will be on **July 23**, in our new location. Starting in June, we joined with Emmanuel UMC to provide our free monthly meals to the public. Folks from both churches will be helping to prepare and serve the delicious meals, with Edna still heading up the cooking. The meals will be available as take out only from 5 to 5:30 PM, but now served at Emmanuel UMC Church.

### *August Picnic*

In August, on our normal 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, **August 27**, we will be expanding the monthly dinner to an outdoor picnic. This picnic will be held in the empty grass lot next to our church (where the “LOCKPORT” sign is). It will begin at 5:00 PM, and still presented free to the public. We will have tents, tables, outdoor grilling, and a bounce house for kids.

*We will need plenty of help for the picnic. Please sign up (there will be a sign-up sheet) to lend a hand!*



## *Grieving a Giant*

Learning about the passing of my favorite biblical theologian made it a bit difficult to be at the UCCNY Annual Meeting in Albany last weekend. I learned of the passing of Walter Brueggemann on the trip from Buffalo to Albany. His was the most imminent voice in my educational journey of ministry. Brueggemann wrote and taught and preached about the prophetic tradition within the biblical scriptures.

Introduced to Brueggemann in his seminal work entitled *Theology of the Old Testament*, this **777 page** text led to my growing sense of wonderment about the Old Testament. Writing over **100 books**, Brueggemann offers an invitation over and over and over again to the church to reclaim the prophetic imagination. It is the prophet that God sends into the world with a new vision or picture of what the world could be. This new picture of the world offered by God is the foundation of the prophetic imagination.

Just like the prophets in the bible, God gives us eyes to see a new world dawning among us. And the prophets of the present day are painting us a picture of this new world. The prophets among us are speaking of and showing us a world where harmony abounds, where peace abounds, and where love abounds. Let us open our eyes to see the picture that God has for us . . . it is the vision of the world where God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. Y'all it is an indescribable sight to behold. And once you have seen it, you will never forget it.

Church, open your eyes!

*Abundant Blessings,  
Pastor Hope*



## **HOW TO REACH US**

**Our Website** - [lockportucc.com](http://lockportucc.com)

### **Church Office**

80 Main St. - Suite H

716-433-2545

[lockportunited@roadrunner.com](mailto:lockportunited@roadrunner.com)

### **Mailing Address**

PO Box 427

Lockport, NY 14095

***If you are Hospitalized or  
in need of Pastoral Care***

please contact Pastor Hope  
or the Church Office

***LIKE US*** on facebook

~ and Please ~

***SHARE***

our Posts

It will help us  
reach a wider  
audience!



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## ***Help Us Keep In Touch***

E-mails are a great way for us to get in touch with members when there is a need – snow cancellations, a meeting change, etc. If we don't have yours, please take a moment to send an e-mail note to Cyndy, then we'll have yours on file when we need to be in touch quickly.





3 Mike Derby-Cuadrado  
 4 Richard Dodge III  
 8 Tina Pike  
 8 Sam Corrieri  
 10 Daunt Stenzel  
 17 Barbara Carlson  
 30 Barbara Stein  
 31 Margaret Stenzel

July 30, 2005 –  
 Scott & Rebecca Mietlowski

3 Easton Rongo  
 5 Ashley Zuercher  
 6 Bryan Gritmacher  
 7 David Payne  
 7 Linda Rongo  
 14 Charles Roberts  
 20 Sue Cruickshank  
 22 Dan Holler  
 23 Cyndy Corrieri  
 31 Luca Pelligrina

Aug. 8, 1981 – James & Linda Rongo  
 Aug. 18, 1962 – George & Sue Cruickshank  
 Aug. 27, 1977 – Larry & Karen Henn

## OUR CHURCH CEMETERY

Plots in St. Peter's Cemetery are available for \$800 each. If you would like to purchase plots, just call Dan Holler and he will be happy to help you with that.

## WEEKLY VINE

In the Weekly Vine, we share the full sermon from that week, some highlights from our service, and also any prayer concerns or news that comes up. **If we don't have your e-mail, you will not receive it unless you contact us.**

If you would like to receive the Weekly Vine, just contact Cyndy and provide your e-mail address. If you are receiving it and would rather not, let Cyndy know that, too.

## Happy Summer

TO OUR SHUT-IN MEMBERS

### Lucinda Hohle

Absolut Care - 4540 Lincoln Dr.  
 Gasport, NY 14067

### Linda Layer and Kevin O'Connor

Mt. View Assisted Living  
 5465 Upper Mountain Rd.  
 Lockport, NY 14094

### David Payne

Lockport Rehab & Health Care Center  
 909 Lincoln Avenue - Lockport, NY 14094





## FIND THE GOOD

*But they were grieved. They wept greatly, saying, "How shall we go to the Gentiles and preach the gospel of the Kingdom of the Son of Man? If they did not spare Him, how will they spare us?" Then Mary stood up, greeted them all, and said to her brethren, "Do not weep and do not grieve nor be irresolute, for His grace will be entirely with you and will protect you. But rather, let us praise His greatness, for He has prepared us and made us into humanity." When Mary said this, she turned their hearts to the Good, and they began to discuss the words of the Savior.*

It was the first time that I had ever heard a sermon preached on the Gospel of Mary Magdalene. Taking place at the UCCNY Annual Meeting, the Rev. Natalie Perkins offered us a message that is integral for this very moment. In this passage from the Gospel of Mary, the earliest disciples were afraid and apprehensive and anxious about the work ahead of them. After all, it was Jesus who gave the Great Commission to them and to us. Sent out with the commission to go into the world and make disciples of all nations, our spiritual ancestors wondered whether or not their message would be received by the world . . . because you know, Jesus was killed for the very same message. If he was killed for the gospel, it is possible that they would be too.

If you find yourselves afraid or apprehensive or anxious to share the gospel of good news to the world, know you are not alone. Our spiritual ancestors struggled with this too. The gospel is a threat to the world around us – a threat to the powers that be, a threat to the evil forces, and a threat to the powerful. It turns out that there has never been a time when preaching the good news of the gospel was not a threat to the powers that be in the world. Not surprisingly, the gospel has always been met with resistance because of it. And the earliest disciples knew it because they saw what happened to Jesus.

Because of this, Mary Magdalene offered our spiritual ancestors and us wisdom for how to continue to live into the Great Commission in dangerous and deadly times. Times much like in our times today. Knowing how afraid and anxious and apprehensive the disciples were, Mary Magdalene offers words of wisdom about how to stand firm in the faith. For us to persist and prevail in the work God has called us to do, we must turn our eyes to the good. Turning our eyes to the goodness of God's promises and plans and purposes for this world which are unfolding right before our eyes. Because we are so conditioned to turn our eyes to the bad and the negative, we must train our eyes to see the good all around us.

Training our eyes to see the good will lead us to proclaim "oh my goodness" over and over and over again. "Oh my goodness" will become an affirmation of all the goodness that we see and do in the world. With God's help, we can. Thanks be to God. Amen!

*Abundant Blessings, Pastor Hope*



## Medical Debt

Please don't forget our ongoing mission to help alleviate medical debt for people who are living with the burden of crushing debt from medical bills. (Formerly known as RIP Medical Debt)

Just donating your spare change for this cause can make a HUGE difference! This organization is able to buy \$100 worth of debt for every dollar donated.

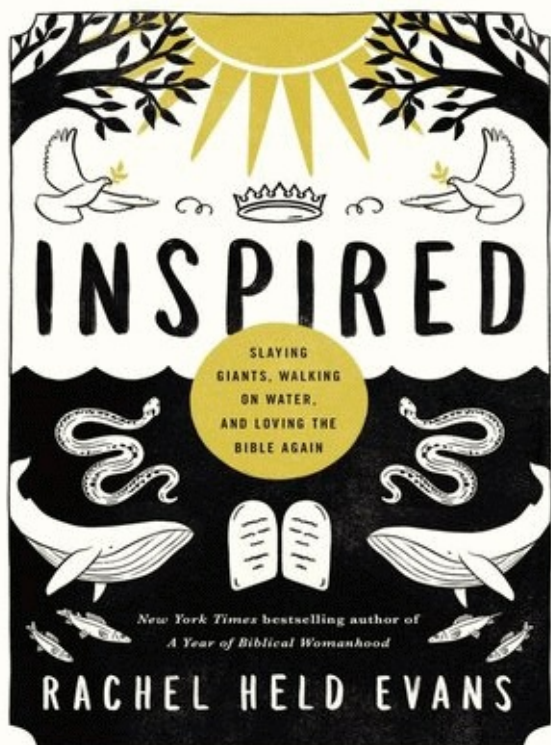
So far this year we have collected \$150.50 – **that's over \$15,000 worth of debt paid!!!**

## GENERAL FUND FINANCIAL SUMMARY May 26 thru June 22

Income from	
Pledges & Offerings	1,899.00
Other Income	21.00
Mortgage Income	2,611.44
Total Expenses	6,494.30



*Have a Safe Holiday!*



## New Book Study

Pastor Hope is offering another opportunity for book study! Join us if you're looking to learn to love the bible more, this study is for you!

This schedule for this upcoming book study will be held at **11am at Lockport UCC:**

- July 31 – Read pp xi to 34
- August 6 – Read pp 35-60
- August 13 – Read pp 61-90
- August 21 – Read pp 91 -114
- August 28 – Read pp 115-146
- September 4 – Read pp 147-174
- September 11 – Read pp 175-190
- September 18 - Read pp 191-222



## *Self-Care Tips for Political Dialogue and Engagement*



Far from being taboo within church, politics are a part of our daily lives. Yup, it's true . . . whether we like it or not. No matter where we stand on the political spectrum, it seemed important as your pastor, to offer some self-care tips to use when engaging in political discussion with others. In a world where politics are so divisive, exercising self-care can help everyone be well when engaging in conversations about politics.

**1) Know You Are Human** – Y'all, we are all human. Because of this, we need to know that we must take care of ourselves in political conversations. Humans need to breathe and eat and rest. And this is true of those we are engaging with in political conversation too. When we take care of ourselves it is easier to "humanize" others. And do not forget . . . behind every comment, reaction, or response is a person whom God loves just as much as God loves you.

**2) Know Your Body** – Because we are all human, we must pay attention to our bodies. Be attuned to your emotions and feelings. It is important to choose to respond instead of reacting to comments or words said to you, which requires us to exercise self-control. Choose to use anger as a power for good.

**3) Know Your Assignment** – Not every assignment is meant for you. This means that not every negative comment or negative reaction or negative post is for you to respond. Just like a syllabus in school, we must know the assignments on the syllabus that God has given us. Y'all stick to your assignments.

**4) Know Your Limits** – Not every opportunity is meant for you. Because of this, it is okay to say "no" at any time that you have reached your limit. Limits are boundaries that keep us from saying or doing something we might regret in our political conversations.

**5) Know Your Goal** – Above all else, it is integral for us to know the why of what we are doing by engaging in political conversations. The why is the purpose for every action, any comment, or any response. Know your goal and stick with it.

If you are looking for self-care for political conversations, keep these in mind. Take care of yourselves, Church. Be well today, tomorrow, and all the days to come.

*Blessings,  
Pastor Hope*



**The Church  
in Action**

United Church of Christ Corner

ucc.org

## UCC PRAYER SHAWL PROJECT

Ever think that the problems of the world are too big for you to tackle? Maybe you think all of the UCC's missions and ministries are beyond your reach to be personally involved. Well here's one of their projects that almost anyone can jump into and be a "hands on" participant.

*CALLING ALL KNITTERS & CROCHET EXPERTS – Our mission project for 2025 has begun! Help us surpass our goal of 200 prayer shawls. Knit or crochet prayer shawls, pray over them, take photos (and send them to us), then distribute them to those who are homebound, or in need of a sense of connection and tangible symbol of love.*

The idea behind this project is basic – provide a symbol of love, caring, and support to someone who needs it. These prayer shawls are a very tangible reminder that someone cares.

### Would You Like to Participate?

Would you like to participate in this project on behalf of LUCC? Any prayer shawls made would be distributed to people in our congregation who are homebound, dealing with illness, loss, or are otherwise in need of a token of our care.

I have several patterns with instructions to knit or crochet prayer shawls. The patterns are very simple – no fancy stitches involved – and only 3 skeins of bulky weight yarn are needed. **Please contact Cyndy if you would like a copy of the patterns.**

*This could be a whole new mission of caring for our congregation!*

## HOUSE OF HOPE - HAITI

The Ecumenical Foundation for Peace and Justice is a non-profit, Christian organization that sponsors the House of Hope in Port-au-Prince. (Supported in part by UCC donations through Global Ministries)

House of Hope is a program for children laboring as domestic servants, and assists young moms, single girls, and elderly women who have been abandoned, by providing them with a safe place to learn social skills and a professional trade. House of Hope also has a broader program to promote a peaceful resolution to conflict through leadership development for community leaders and former gang members.

Life in Haiti is marked by either opulence or poverty, where those who have the wealthy lifestyle are in the minority, and control and utilize the poor. House of Hope endeavors to provide support and a means of escaping the dangers poor children face daily. One House of Hope method is to provide the means for children and adolescents to attend school.

### One Story – Louise

Louise first arrived to House of Hope at age 10 and began attending school. Her mother had died, and she was living with an Aunt, with little to eat, and no opportunity to find employment or attend school. She struggled her first year, as she had never attended school. Soon however, she developed more skills and started to read, write, and solve math equations.

Louise has grown tremendously in self-esteem over the recent years, and she loves to participate in class. Her desire is to become a nurse so that she can help people who are suffering and those who have no money.





# Teach the Truth: Oppose Book Bans!



Stand up for truth, inclusiveness, and the freedom to access diverse stories that reflect the image of God in all people. As people of faith, we affirm the power of truth telling amidst the growth of book bans and censorship around the country.

In many states around the U.S., there are efforts to ban books that teach true American history—silencing stories of under-represented minorities. According to the American Library Association, 2,452 unique titles were targeted for censorship last year alone. Of these titles, the most targeted books were ones written by Black, queer, and trans authors.

Banning books is the first step in the erasure of historical knowledge and accountability. As we witness rapid expansion in the attack against DEI programs in schools and the private sector, we also are witnessing the removal of this history from our national museums and archives.

Stories that share untold histories are sacred and must be protected. Juneteenth—a holiday only recently recognized at the national level—brings long-overdue attention to the true history of our nation, reminding us that freedom and justice for all have often been delayed, especially for Black Americans. This recent recognition underlines how vital it is to tell the whole truth and honor every story in our shared history. The work of teaching honest history and uplifting diverse voices is a sacred ministry rooted in the gospel mandate to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.”

From the state to the federal level, we must make clear that people of faith believe that history ought not be erased for the comfort of white supremacy and do not want to see any federal funding pulled to censor states and the people’s education. Tell your elected officials and Secretary of Education Linda McMahon today to stop historical erasure through book bans!

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THIS  
OR OTHER ISSUES, YOU CAN . . .

**TAKE ACTION**

Contacting your Representative and Senators in Washington CAN make a difference. Send a letter or email, or make a phone call to let them know your feelings on this issue.

The UCC has an easy-to-use letter template on their website that you can use if you like, to contact your US Representative and Senators. Find it here:

<https://www.ucc.org/action-center/>